Marriage in the Ten Commandments

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The
Ten Commandments of Marriage

by
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Introduction

The ten commandments given by God to his people at Mt. Sinai contain eternal principles for human conduct in all spheres of life. It should come as no surprise that embedded within the decalogue are principles that have special application to the institution of marriage. I have identified ten important principles of the decalogue that have special relevance to the context of marriage. They are summarized in this little booklet with the hope that they will be beneficial to couples all over the world. These ten principles include:

• prioritizing marriage
• discovering the uniqueness and specialness of marriage
• living out the transparency of marriage
• valuing and spending time in marriage
• honoring and respecting the sanctity of marriage
• nurturing the life of marriage
• guarding the sacred precinct of marriage
• cultivating marriage as a fruitful garden
• building trust and intimacy in marriage
• making marriage a journey of discovering and sharing mutual treasure.
I. “YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.” Exodus 20:3

No other human relationship should preempt the marriage relationship. It must be primary, foundational, number one. The purity of this allegiance sets each member free for loving, serving, caring, and respecting other healthy relationships which provide both the pattern and the energy.

Maudine Fee

Case Study. Mary and John have been married for eighteen years but over the years they have drifted apart instead of growing close to one another. They have given priority to everything but their marriage—their professions, their children, their friends, their hobbies, and their family of origin. Their marriage is on the rocks because they never make it their first priority. Like so many couples, they thought their marriage could be put on auto pilot and it would simply survive. They have now awakened to the sad reality that although they have a few common interests and share the same bed, they have become strangers because they failed to make their marriage their first priority. Over the years they have stopped practicing little courtesies to one another. They no longer share their dreams, desires, and fantasies. Each keeps his/her own secrets. While still legally married to one another, they drifted apart emotionally and psychologically.

Marriage is the foundational human relationship. It is the building block upon which all familial relationships are established. The first commandment of marriage is the recognition of the primacy of the marriage relationship. All other human relationships must be subservi-
ent to this primary relationship. The Scripture declares, “then shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife and the two shall be one flesh” Gen 2:24. In order for a marriage to be established, the family of origin of both spouses must become secondary. When a man marries, his former greatest loyalty, which was to his parents, must now be demoted so his wife may take first place. There can be no cleaving without leaving. And that leaving behind must take place in order that the two may be joined together. Primary allegiance and loyalty now must be transferred from the family of origin to this new relationship. Many couples try to serve two masters at the same time by clinging to the old family relationship while attempting to establish the new marital relationship. This never works. Primary loyalty must be given to the marriage relationship in order for it to prosper. Energy and effort must be invested in it.

This commitment must also apply to any other competing ties or obligations, not only at the beginning of the marriage relationship but throughout the lives of the couple. No job, vacation, career, children, or hobbies should challenge the primacy of the marriage relationship. The command is clear; no other relationship shall take priority before the marriage relationship. It must stand at the very top of all priorities. The husband cannot be married to the demands of job, hobbies, or friends. This applies especially to pastors and other church leaders as well who may be tempted to neglect their wives for the “good of the work.” The Bible affirms this principle in Deuteronomy 24:5. There, husbands were exempted from going to war for the first year of their marriage. The moment the relationship is relegated to any position other than first place, it begins to unravel. Couples who spend their time on everything else
so they have little time for their marriage soon discover that their marriage will die.

Love in marriage is a living and breathing entity that must be nurtured by affection, care, concern, compassion, empathy, understanding, support, and intimacy. Unless there is a willingness and intentionality on the part of both partners to nurture their marriage through consistent acts of love, that marriage will degenerate. It will become a hollow, and dead relationship where both feel trapped, frustrated, and unhappy.

We pledge by the grace of God to make our marriage top priority in our lives.

II - “YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF AN IDOL. . . .” EXODUS 20:4

One should not set up an unreal ideal. One’s marriage should not be patterned after someone else’s idea of marriage. Each marriage is unique; it is a living, growing, dynamic between two people in the process of becoming one. The goal and excitement of a godly marriage is to be found in the risk of “knowing” in the transparent biblical sense - safe only because one’s ultimate worth, identity, and security are in one’s relationship with God.

Maudine Fee

Case Study. Jim and Terry married while they were teenagers. Jim was only eighteen and Terry was sixteen. They have been married for twelve years. Being so young and immature when they got married, they had no idea what marriage was about. While in high school, Terry and Jim became sexually involved, and Terry became pregnant.
In order to cover up the shame of the pregnancy, they were strongly encouraged by both sets of parents to get married. They entered marriage totally unprepared. They had no idea what a successful marriage was like. The marriages of both sets of parents were troublesome. Whatever they had witnessed in their homes, they now unconsciously replicated in their own marriage. They found themselves constantly at war. They repeated the failed patterns and efforts of their parents. This only increased their misery. Their youth, lack of preparation, naivete, and poor marriage models all conspired to create an intolerable situation from which both wanted to be released.

Every marriage is unique and special. No one should pattern his or her marriage after someone else’s. Many couples unconsciously follow the script of the marriage of their family of origin. One should be aware of this natural proclivity and intentionally and prayerfully ask God to create a unique and special relationship with one’s spouse.

Spouses should give up their irrational and naive expectations that their marriage will make them whole or fulfill all their needs. Marriage never fulfills all one’s needs. Only God can do that. Augustine says, “Thou has made us for thyself and our souls shall not find rest until they have found rest in you.” Only God can fill the void or god-hole in one’s life. Marriage, however, can be a wonderful journey together with a partner who experiences levels of fulfillment that one could not attain by oneself. It takes two whole persons to make a marriage. Both spouses must be sufficiently differentiated and possess a strong sense of worth and value before God. If one spouse is differentiated and the other is not, the mar-
riage will be unbalanced because one will try to make up the deficiency of the undifferentiated spouse. If one comes to the relationship seeking some one to take care of them or to be taken care of by someone else, or if one is running away from a situation, the result will be a disaster. It takes two whole beings to make a marriage. In God’s divine mathematics $1 + 1$ does not $= 2$ but a new unique $1$. It is not $1 + 1$ which $= a$ normal $1$; but $2$ becoming $1$ flesh.

We pledge by the grace of God to recognize and cherish the uniqueness of our marriage.

III. “YOU SHALL NOT MISUSE THE NAME. . . .”

Exodus 20:7

One should not make a mockery of marriage by allowing such things as an independent spirit, tension, bickering, alienation, emptiness, perversion or abuse—attitudes and behaviors that mar this reflection of God’s unity. It is meant to be a “holy matrimony,” a “sacred covenant.”

Maudine Fee

Case Study. Tom and Laura have been married for fifteen years. It has been fifteen years of misery. They live like cats and dogs, bickering, quarreling and fighting all the time. They create such a toxic environment that their friends avoid them. Fortunately they have no children, but they are a constant source of irritation to each other. No one observing this couple would ever want to be married. By their miserable example, they bring shame on this divine institution. Their marriage is not holy wedlock but unholy deadlock.
One should not make a mockery of marriage by failing to live out its true meaning. If one is married, he/she should live like someone in love. Marriage is a holy covenant, ordained and blessed by God for the happiness of the human race. When people enter its sacred precincts they are under divine obligation. One cannot be married and still live like someone who is single. People should bear the name of marriage with truthfulness and honesty and live out its meaning. They should not be separated long from their spouses nor withdraw their affection from each other. No walls of separation and alienation should come between them. They should live out the spirit of forgiveness towards each other, sleep together, talk often to each other, pray with and for each other, and share their most intimate secrets, wildest dreams, deepest fears, and loftiest imaginations with each other. No third party may intrude within the sacred circle of their love, they should give generously to each other, be kind and affectionate with each other, share each others joys and sorrows, support and encourage each other through all of life’s storms and crises. Both should nurture each other with love and be loyal and committed to each other.

The badge of matrimonial unity should be worn with pride. Let married couples be models of matrimonial felicity that others may be induced to enter into its sacred garden and feast upon its matchless bounties.

Spouses should love each other constantly, kiss each other, hold each other’s hand, and let no opportunity for doing good to each other slip away without doing it. As far as possible they must limit their criticisms and affirm, affirm, and affirm. They should embrace each other often so that the smell of their beloved becomes firmly entrenched in the cerebral cortex and never, never, never give marriage a bad reputation by failing to love their spouse as God commands.
We pledge by the grace of God to live out the true meaning of marriage.

IV. “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” Exodus 20:8

Spouses should set aside time in honor of this special relationship to spend time solely with and for each other. The success of work can never equal the rewards, the renewal, the re-creation to be found in the marriage relationship. Taking time to tend and enjoy marriage is an expression of gratitude to God for this priceless gift.

Maudine Fee

Case Study. Adam and Chelsea have been married for twenty years. Both of them are busy professionals, one a physician, the other a nurse practitioner. They are constantly on the run. Their work schedules do not coincide so that they are rarely together at home. In those rare moments when they are at home they are so emotionally and physically exhausted all they want to do is sleep. They have become strangers to each other and they are beginning to question the usefulness of their marriage. They have allowed the obligations of work and other things to choke out the life of their marriage. They rarely spend time together. Unwittingly, their failure to set a special time to be together has now caused them to drift apart from each other. They have developed resentment and anger towards each other. Because they do not meet together from time to time to discuss these issues, their marriage is in danger of breaking apart.
One’s marriage is like a garden that must be tended and cared for. Remember, marriage needs special time when both spouses can spend cherished moments together for the health of the marriage. Time alone together on a regular basis is critical for the marriage. As God has appointed one day out of seven days to meet with his bride, the church, people should set time aside on a regular basis to tend the marriage garden. The noxious weeds of unresolved anger, guilt, or frustration may have sprung up in the marriage garden. This is the time to uproot the deadly plants before they overwhelm this garden. Spouses need to spend time with each other, to speak of the unresolved issues before they accumulate and extinguish the love of their marriage, to let this be a time of confession and cleansing and to open their hearts to each other and share their vulnerabilities and weaknesses. Spouses should confess their faults one to another and pray for one another.

This is sacred time. Nothing nor no one should interfere during this time together. The spouses should focus their energies during this time to build each other up emotionally and spiritually. This should be a period of marital rejuvenation. Maybe a romantic getaway in some far away exotic island or a weekend in a local motel could be the kick the marriage needs to bring back the sparkle.

Marriage must be kept holy. Spouses must spend time together. If they are too busy, they should make time.

We pledge by the grace of God to spend time together to nurture our marriage.
V. “Honor your father and mother. . . .”
Exodus 20:12

The well-kept marriages of children bring honor to their parents. They are a living tribute to the role models provided. The strong marriages and productive lives of the children and grandchildren are a source of peace and security in later years and an unending source of enjoyment. The greatest gift one can give his or her parents, as well as themselves and their children, is a healthy marriage.

Maudine Fee

Case Study. Jim and Sue have been married for seven years. They have a real problem in respecting and honoring each other. They curse each other, and call each other derogatory names. There is no respect or honor among this couple. Sue is an incredible nag. Jim had barely arrived home when he is met by a stream of commands—take out the garbage, mow the lawn, fix the bathroom, pick up your clothes. Jim reciprocates by calling Sue a slob, a lazy fat housewife. This only increases Sue’s angry and she hurls more hateful words at Jim and so a fire is ignited that rages on and on and threatens to consume them both.

The couple should honor each other as one would honor his or her parents. They should esteem one another highly, regard one another with respect and dignity, and treat one another as a precious and sacred gift given by one’s Creator. Rough handling, insensitive remarks, failure to listen, ignoring, excluding, cutting off communication, patronizing, and humiliating are all acts of disrespect. Couples should treat each other as they would like to be treated, boost self-esteem by affirma-
tion, honor, esteem, build up, and regard one’s beloved as precious and priceless. What is the worth of a spouse? Their worth can never be measured by gold or silver, their price is far above rubies.

There is no greater way to honor the memory of parents and perpetuate their legacy than through a successful marriage. To watch growth and maturity in a marriage will bring a sweet smile and great deal of satisfaction to parents. They will revel in a couple’s joy and fulfillment. The children, the fruits of a marriage, will be a source of happiness for parents. Grandparents love grand children and are notorious for lavishing love on grand children, especially those reared within a happy and strong marriage.

There is no greater gift a couple can pass on to their children than providing for them a marriage worthy of their emulation. A strong marriage provides a safe and loving environment where children are loved, nurtured, kept safe and secure and allowed to mature and differentiate into the kind of unique individuals God intended them to be.

Not only does a couple honor their parents and children by a strong marriage but also honor their heavenly parent. It was God who invented marriage and designed it for the happiness of the human race. Those who follow his blueprint for marriage and discover the joys and wonders of the relationship that God intended, bring tremendous joy and satisfaction to the heart of God. This is proof that God keeps his promises and his word is truth; they provide a powerful and compelling testimony to the world. Imagine for a moment how God smiles as he watches happy, joyous couples living out his plan for marriage.

Marriages lived according to God’s plan are minia-
ture relationships of the relationship that exists among the three members of the Godhead. God dwells in perfect harmony with the Godhead. They are distinct but inseparable beings working together, cooperating with each other and loving each other.

Couples should not allow children to come between them. While a relationship with children is vitally important it is still secondary to a marriage. The best thing that parents can do for children is to love each other completely and build a strong marriage. Hobbies and friends are also important but when they begin to interfere in a marriage, they should be left aside immediately and attention given to the marriage.

God calls spouses to be faithful to each other because this is what he is. God is a faithful God keeping His promises. Faithfulness is the primary characteristic of His children. Faithfulness is the glue that holds a marriage together.

We pledge by the grace of God to honor and respect each other.

VI. “You shall not murder.” Exodus 20:13

One should not “kill” a spouse with neglect, cutting remarks, or domination. Many wives become nonpersons, engulfed by their husbands. Many husbands become hollow shells, sucked dry of self-worth by unappreciative demeaning, demanding wives.

Maudine Fee

Case Study. Leo and Rachel have been married for eleven years. Both come from families where to survive,
one needed a sharp tongue and sharp wit. They bring these well-honed skills into their marriage and proceed to inflict tremendous injury on each other. Using biting sarcasm, cruel criticism and even stony silence they constantly fight with each other. Blow after blow rains down upon them until for all intents and purposes their marriage is dead. They have literally killed their marriage.

No one should kill a marriage by neglect. Pay attention to the needs of one’s spouse. Fulfill their need for love, affection, appreciation, and affirmation. Be sensitive in the small things. Always acknowledge the presence of one’s spouse when rising in the morning, leaving for work, and returning home. Cultivate the small hugs, kisses and affections tucked between life’s relentless activities.

No one should kill a marriage by criticism and put downs. Be lavish in praise and stingy in criticisms. For every single criticism compensate with seven praises. Nothing deflates a spouse’s self-esteem as criticism. Such words are like the slash and burn method of farming, leaving their ugly scars upon forested landscapes of the soul. Plant a garden; do not create a waste land.

No one should kill a marriage by seeking to control or dominate one’s spouse. Release control by unleashing love. As love grows and multiplies the need for power becomes less and less, for love and power cannot coexist within the relationship. Build the power of a relationship in love. Love never seeks to control or dominate. On the contrary it empowers and leaves the lover vulnerable to the beloved.

Nurture a relationship so that it produces life and not death. Deposit love, care, understanding, patience, and sensitivity in the love account. Fill up the love cup with compassion, kindness, gentleness, and forgiveness. Let
each day be a day where love is being created and reproduced so it can be passed on to the children. One should not kill the spirit by cutting words and slashing sarcasm.

One should not kill emotional openness by cruelly manhandling one’s feelings. Allow feelings to be expressed without fear. Listen to feelings and ask for clarification of feelings to avoid any misunderstanding. One should not lose patience or raise one’s voice.

Never, never, never allow anger to accumulate in the heart. Couples should not let the sun go down on their anger. Nothing kills love more than anger. Unresolved anger always kills relationships and is the forerunner to murder.

*We pledge by the grace of God to infuse our marriage with life giving and life sustaining deeds.*

### VII. “You shall not commit adultery.”

*Exodus 20:14*

One should not allow other alliances—not work, ministry, friends, children, or self to which one gives their total self. Only God and one’s spouse have the right to all.

*Maudine Fee*

**Case Study.** Leonard and Loretta have been married for fifteen years. They are the proud parents of four children. Both of them are professionals making good salaries. They are also church going Christians. They have had a fairly good marriage until the last five years when things started to go downhill. Leonard is unsatisfied due to lack of affection from his wife. Every intimation towards her is rebuffed except the few fleeting moments when they have intimate relationship. Leonard feels re-
jected and isolated from his wife. One day he encounters a young woman named Brenda who seemed genuinely interested in him. They strike up a friendship. They both recognize the enjoyment of each others company and spent many hours talking. They feel bonded together. The husband feels a renewed sense of rejuvenation when he is with Brenda. Before long he falls in love with her. Although he never went to bed with her he feels a sense of guilt about the relationship, but he feels compelled to continue his relationship with Brenda because it fills a deep void in his heart.

Let a sacred boundary be drawn around the relationship so that nothing will come between one’s beloved. Let no one but God be allowed to come within this sacred circle. Guard one’s marriage with all diligence. Only a spouse has the right to the partners total being.

Be careful even of the good things of life—work, children, vocation, family, hobbies, and friends. Do not be so consumed with a job that marriage becomes subservient to ambitions. Let the priority of the marriage dictate all other human relationships and activities. If some other relationship or activity is diminishing the marriage, take stock immediately, act swiftly or the marriage will be sidelined.

To commit adultery is not simply to be unfaithful to one’s spouse but to be more faithful to other things in life that take away time and energy from marriage. Pledge that this will be the number one human relationship. Upon the strength of this relationship rest the superstructure of the entire nation. Weak marriages will not nurture strong children. Unfaithful spouses will not produce strong law abiding citizens. Half-committed spouses will not produce loyal and committed Christian children.

God calls spouses to be faithful to each other be-
cause of who he is; a He is a faithful God who keeps his promises. Marriage is about keeping promises, it is about faithfulness. We show ourselves to be children of God when in marriage we act like our heavenly father.

We pledge by the grace of God to be faithful to each other.

VIII. “You shall not steal.” Exodus 20:15

One should not rob his or her spouse of their potential, gifts, rights, recognition, or pride. It is a privilege and joy to discover hidden “treasures” in your partner, bring them to light, nurture and encourage them to maturity, and finally bask in the reflected glow of their public recognition. A spouse has the power to lift up.

Maudine Fee

Case Study. Cynthia and Cecil have been married for eighteen years. They have a beautiful five year old son who is their pride and joy. Both Cynthia and Cecil were former athletes. Cecil was a former runner and Cynthia a former basketball player. They are very competitive and winning is everything to them. This competitive spirit, to win at all cost has a negative effect on their marriage. They seem willing to run over each other trying to outdo the other in order to capture the headlines. Among friends and family members there is always a fierce competition to see whose version of events is accepted as the real story. They abruptly interrupt each others’ conversation to make corrections of the others narration of an event. It is as if they are engaged in a constant battle to try and steal each others glory.
One should not rob his or her spouse of their ability to fulfill their potential and to discover all that God wants them to be. Be a catalyst in their development. Like a careful gardener tend to the marriage by nurturing. Water and fertilize it with lots of kindness, generosity, compassion, tenderness, sensitivity, and gentleness. Love is a delicate plant requiring necessary nutrients for it to grow and mature. One should not, by neglect or rough handling injure this plant lest it be robbed of its ability to grow and mature. Do all to provide an optimal environment for growth.

One should not steal his or her spouses’ thunder by interrupting them while speaking. Both partners have an important story and need to say it in their own unique way. Enjoy the achievements and successes of one’s spouse and work diligently toward their fulfillment.

Take nothing from a partner that would belittle, demean or diminish self-worth. On the contrary do all to build up. Revel in the fine art of giving, giving, and giving. Cast your bread upon the water and it shall return to you after many days. Whatever good done for one’s spouse will return a rich reward. This is done not for one’s own sake but for love and the desire to see one’s partner bloom and blossom like the radiant daffodils swaying in the gentle breeze in a verdant valley of flowers.

One should help discover hidden treasures and undiscovered gifts within their partner, helping to bring them to light and all will benefit so that the marital experience can be enriched.

We pledge by the grace of God to be catalyst of growth for each other.
IX. "You shall not give false testimony." Exodus 20:16

One should not blame one's spouse for mistakes and weaknesses, or make unjust accusations. Be honest and straightforward in appreciation, confrontation, criticism, and conflict. Speaking the truth in love. ‘To operate from hypocrisy, from pretense, from mistrust, is to limit the other’s opportunities for growth and maturity.’

Maudine Fee

Case Study. Ryan and Revella have been married for five years. Ryan has a problem of truth telling. Ryan cannot give a straight forward answer to any question. He either exaggerates or tells half-truths. When confronted by his wife about coming home late at night he always attributes it to working late. Although he does work late some nights, he always stops off at the bar for a few drinks before going home. He tries to hide this from his wife. She smells the alcohol on his breath but he still denies drinking or going to the bar. He is so used to telling lies that it seems as if he has a problem differentiating between lies and the truth. His lies and prevarications create a crisis of trust in their marriage and consequently he is unable to develop real intimacy with his wife. To protect herself against his lies, Revella withdraws into a shell. She is weary of Ryan’s lies and feels she cannot trust him any longer. The marriage is deteriorating into a hollow empty shell, devoid of intimacy and passion. To the world they appear married but they know in their hearts they are living a lie.

Of all the ingredients for a happy marriage there is probably nothing more important than trust—hon-
esty and truthfulness in all things. Couples should always be honest and truthful in their relationship with each other, cultivating trust, for only in an atmosphere of trust can true intimacy thrive. Without trust there is no intimacy, without intimacy there is no bonding, without bonding there is no true marriage. A happy, joyous marriage rises or falls upon the delicate thread of trust. Marriage demands truthfulness and honest. Without it marriage becomes a hollow, empty relationship devoid of passion and intimacy. One may still engage in intimate acts without being truly intimate with each other. Couples should not overstate or understate the truth, withhold information that is necessary for the good of the relationship, use pretense or act hypocritically, manipulate, dissimulate or prevaricate.

One should not lie by silence, body language, or words but speak the truth always in love. Avoid babbling to others about a partner’s faults, deficiencies and weaknesses to make oneself look better. Love covers a multitude of sins. Listen to each other before jumping to false conclusions. Do not blame each other for problems in the relationship. Avoid rationalizing and justifying negative actions and feelings and own up to them. No matter how provocative a spouse may be, each one is responsible for their own actions and feelings. One’s partner cannot make the other do anything they don’t want to do.

One must trust one’s spouse. If trust is broken, extend forgiveness and allow the spirit of God to repair the broken trust. As we trust, it will be returned to us. Be a truthful, sincere, honest witness of what a happy marriage is all about.

*We pledge to live out the truth in our marriage.*
X. "YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR’S POSSESSIONS.

One should not begrudge his or her spouse gifts, strengths, opportunities, earning power, etc. We will not stand higher for having stepped on the other person. One should not wish their partner to be something they are not. Learn gratitude for what you have chosen. Discover and appreciate the value of the treasure within your house.

Maudine Fee

Case Study. Tyler and Tania have been married for twenty-five years. They are the proud parents of two boys. The tried hard to build their marriage but seemed to have problems with covetousness. They desire what the other has. Instead of sharing what they have they want to keep it for themselves. They seem to follow the old adage, “what is yours is mine and what is mine is my own.” They are jealous of each other’s success. They do not see marriage as a team effort. Driven by their own selfish agenda they seem interested only in their own welfare, seeing each other’s gifts, talents and resources as possessions to be added to their own, to enhance their own welfare. Neither is willing to help the other achieve success. On the contrary, they sabotage and undermine each other’s efforts to attain their goal. Tyler refuses to help Tania with the house work even though Tania works and is attending school. Tania sometimes ask Ryan to help her with her homework, but he refuses because he is afraid that Tania may actually succeed in her studies, making something of herself, earn more money than him, and achieve some personal independence. Tania also refuses to help Tyler with his challenges and offers little support or encouragement. When Tyler fails
in some of his efforts she experiences a morbid sense of satisfaction and mutters to herself, “Serves him right, he deserves that.” The marriage is not longer beneficial to either but has degenerated into a mutually destructive relationship.

One should not desire gifts, talents, earning power, beauty, health or anything that belongs to one’s spouse. Joy and fulfillment is not in coveting but in giving. Give freely of love, time, and resources to each other. Coveting lies at the root of all sins, for sin begins in the evil intents and desires of the heart. Therefore, guard the heart for out of it are the issues of life. Monitor carefully and often, feelings and desires towards one’s spouse. Destroy the feelings that create covetousness and cultivate those that tend towards nurturing and uplifting each other.

Give your partner time and space. Couples should not suffocate each other by their continual presence, but should not isolate each other by intentional absence. Allow each other to be who they want to be, not fashioning him or her after one’s own image but giving each other freedom to be the best they can be within the relationship. Do not squeeze each other into the mold of one’s own imagination.

A partner should never raise oneself up at the expense of their spouse for what glory will be achieved if it was gained at the expense of another. Put each other before oneself. Instead of stepping on him or her, count it a privilege to raise each other up. Find glory and joy not in self-exaltation but in the elevation of the other.

One should not be jealous of the successes and triumphs of their spouse but rejoice; view them as one’s own successes. Stand in solidarity with each other in defeat or victory, success or failure.
We pledge by the grace of God that we will never covet anything from each other but we will freely share all that we have with each other and wish the best for each other.